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A CHILD'S VERSES

1878.



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LOS ANGELES

Rosa Warden.

In memory of her old schoolfellow,
the authoress.

December. 1878.



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A CHILD'S VERSES.



A CHILD'S VERSES.

FOUND AFTER HER DEATH.

In Memoriam.

PRIVATELY PRINTED.
BIRMINGHAM.

1878.

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This Little Volume
OF
LITTLE POEMS
BY
ROSA GRIFFITHS,
WHO DIED MARCH 16, 1877,
AGED 16,
IS OFFERED BY HER SISTER
TO
HER MANY FRIENDS.

H. M. G.

853815

Dedication.

I dedicate this little book
To one I dearly love ;
The guider of my feeble steps
When from my path I rove.

She helps my weary feet to walk
Into the way of rest :
And of my friends I always think—
I love my sister best.

R. G.



POSTHUMOUS POEMS.



The Holly Berries.

When the snow is falling thickly,
When the winds do keenly blow,
Then the holly berries glitter,
Then the holly berries show.

In the depth of coldest winter,
When all else was dead and gone,
'Midst the foliage dark and gloomy,
Bright red holly berries shone.

Lovely ever; cheering all;
Brightening the prospect near:
When they fall upon the ground,
Falling like a rosy tear.



The Prince's Bride.

Of all the garlands I have ever seen,
This was the fairest of them all ;
Not flowers of red and white or leaves of green—
A ring of maidens large and small.

Into this garland of fair smiling girls
A Prince is led in manhood ripe ;
A herald then aloft his flag unfurls,
Minstrels and bards begin to pipe.

“Choose,” says the herald, “from these lovely maids,
One maid to answer questions three ;
One who is good, whose beauty never fails,
And she, O Prince, belongs to thee.”

The maidens blush and smile, and coyly hide
Behind their veils each tell-tale face ;
Each hopes that she may be the Prince's bride,
And may all others' charms efface.

The Prince arose, and read aloud these lines :

“Which is the longest lived of three ?

Bright, merry-hearted Hope that ne’er repines,
Sweet Faith, or gentle Charity ? ”

None answered, and all gave it up but one—

A small, bright, fairy, star-like maid,
With eyes that smote the heart they looked upon ;
She rose, and thus her words she said :

“Most noble Prince, Hope has the shortest breath,
For oft sweet Hope will early die ;
But long remembered, even after death,
Is sweet and bounteous Charity.

But longer life than she has steadfast Faith,
For loving Faith can never die ;
So longer life than Hope it hath,” she saith,
“And longer life than Charity.”

Right was the answer. Then two questions more
The Prince did ask, and answered she,
With many a word of priceless lore ;
And her’s was then the victory.

“Call now the horses ! Love, fear not to ride
My charger besprinkled with foam.”
Away and away rode the Prince and his bride ;
Away and away they rode home.



Memories.

Sorrows oppress us,
Joy will not stay,
Trouble seems near us,
Hope dies away ;
But still in the depth of our darkest night,
Our memories cheer us—they're always bright.

The weary mother,
Resting at night,
With throbbing headache
And failing sight,
Yet brightens again, as her joys bygone
Seem to live again in her infant son.

The aged soldier
With shortened breath,
With his future thoughts
All turned on death,
Has only memories, shining and bright
Like a brilliant star in the dead of night.

When storms are sudden
And waves are high,
And the drowning man
Knows he must die,
He sees his whole life with its light and shade,
But the light remains when the shadows fade.

Through joys and sorrows
Our life we take;
Most joys are sent us,
Most griefs we make:
But through all our sorrow our joys remain,
And we travel onward, forgetting pain.



The Hunters.

Oh see, the merry hunters start
To hunt the hare, to hunt the hart;
See! see! away they go.
Tally ho! Tally ho!

Across the moor, and crag, and fen,
And o'er the brook, and through the glen,
Reckless of friend and foe.

Tally ho! Tally ho!

Away they ride, away they ride,
On swift and handsome beasts astride,
O'er the plain, high and low.

Tally ho! Tally ho!



Colin.

The wind was whistling o'er rock and tree,
Calling for Colin;
The waves were dashing in mere and sea,
Roaring for Colin.
A maid was sitting upon the lea,
Sighing for Colin.

But Colin laughed at the biting wind
That called for Colin,
And cried—"The waters I do not mind
That roar for Colin;
And a fairer, richer maid I'll find
To sigh for Colin."

And Colin wandered o'er the sea
That roared for Colin:
His heart was glad, his step was free—
Oh, happy Colin!
But not a single maid found he
That sighed for Colin.

Said he, "I'll go to Scotland dear,
That loves her Colin;
And there, beside the frozen mere,
Sighing for Colin,
Sits one who is gazing far and near,
Looking for Colin."

He reached fair Scotland's sunny shore,
That smiled for Colin;
He reached the mere, but there no more
She sighed for Colin;
He came and knocked at her cottage door—
It oped for Colin.

"Ha! ha!" laughed she, "you're come at last,
Vain, faithless Colin;
But now my love for you is past;
So farewell, Colin."
He stood and looked at her aghast—
Unhappy Colin!

"Oh, winds that howl about the hill,
Take up poor Colin.
Oh, ruthless waves that ne'er are still,
Receive poor Colin."
At last, the river by the mill
Drowns haughty Colin.

Then the maid cried aloud, "O wave
That killed my Colin,
With ice-cold waters my brow lave,
As thou did'st Colin's;
And here for aye I'll make my grave,
Where thou madest Colin's."



The Bells.

The morning bells are ringing
In joy for merry May;
The children round the maypole dance,
And sing the morn away,
While merrily the songsters chant
Their sweet and soothing lay.

The evening bells are ringing;
The people flock to pray;
The sunbeams light the ivied church,
Then deepen into grey,
And on the earth the shadows fall,
And daylight dies away.





Fines to a Mountain Daisy.

I wandered o'er the rocky crags,
And sat awhile to rest ;
The evening sun had wellnigh sunk,
And golden was the west ;

When in a cranny of the rock
I spied a daisy white :
The granite nook was in the shade,
The flower was tipped with light.

Oh, little angel, robed in white,
With heart of true, true gold,
How many years have you been here ?
What tales can you unfold ?

Sweet snowy bud, where will you go
When dead to earthly things ?
What power will take you when you die,
And give you spirit wings ?

Or will the breezes lift you up,
And waft you far away?
Or gentle sunbeams bear you off
To everlasting day?

Perhaps the sportive winds will rise
And bear you off to sea;
But, best of all, an angel bright
May come and gather thee.



Epithalamion.

Joy to thee! joy to thee! fairy king's daughter,
The joy bells are ringing, are ringing for thee;
While merry young voices from over the water
Have sent thee kind messages over by me.

Joy to thee! joy! for the bells that are ringing,
Are ringing to call in the bridegroom and priest;
While merrily, merrily maidens are singing,
And presents are showered to the first and the least.

Joy to thee! joy! When the bells have ceased pealing,
The wife of the Earth-child, dear maiden, thou'lt be;
And while at the altar with him thou art kneeling,
They still will be chiming, and chiming for thee;

Joy to thee! joy to thee! fairy king's daughter,
The bells that are ringing, are ringing for thee;
And strains of sweet music from over the water
Bring love, peace, and gladness from over the sea.

Then joy to thee! Hasten and put on thy veil,
And put the white bridal wreath into thy hair,
And white bridal robes too that on the ground trail,
And hold up aloft the white lily you bear.

For lilies, dear maiden, are types of pure truth,
And white is the type of an innocent heart;
So keep thy heart white in thine innocent youth,
And keep it still white when with girlhood you part.

Joy to thee! joy to thee! queen of fair fame,
The bridegroom is waiting, is waiting for thee.
Though your smiles be for others, your tears for the same,
My heart shall be kept for you over the sea.



Fines on the Death of a Child.

In his mother's arms reclining,
A loved infant goes to rest;
Leaving her in grief, and pining—
Breathes his last upon her breast.

Though a father's care is o'er him,
And his mother minds him aye,
And his parents both adore him,
Still the babe is ta'en away.

Yes! the babe was ta'en to heaven,
Midst their sorrow most profound;
That sweet hope so newly given,
Coming, falls unto the ground.

Yet, sweet mother, sadly weeping,
Think, when bending o'er your child,
That he now is calmly sleeping
In the arms of Jesus mild.

Dry your tears and cease your crying;
Look upon the angel face
Of your child, who now is flying
Upward, to the Throne of Grace.



Song.

The wind is sighing—dreary, dreary—
And everywhere doth howl and moan;
And here I stand—alone, alone—
And I am weary.

The leaves are rustling—dreary, dreary—
And every plant's bereft of flowers ;
The sky is dark, the tempest lowers,
And I am weary.

I hear the swan's song—dreary, dreary—
His last song, floating down the stream ;
I hear the sea gull's startled scream,
And I am weary.

All tells of tempest—dreary, dreary—
All tells of pestilence and death :
“Come unto me, my child,” saith He,
“I am not weary.”

I leave this sad earth—dreary, dreary—
I mount up to my heavenly place,
Where I can look upon His face,
No longer weary.



The Conflict at Sea.

The tempest thundered loud and wild,
The waves leapt up with glist'ning spray,
But louder than the loudest winds
Sounded the terrible affray.

And through the blackness of the night
Shot flames of fire; a bursting shell
Showed livid faces in its light,
As masts and boards together fell.

The cry that rent the winds was hushed,
As from the crowd upon the beach
There sprang a boy, with rope in hand,
Striving the sinking ships to reach.

He buffeted the roaring waves;
But all in vain—a lightning flash
Struck him with death—the noble boy!—
Then vanished with a thunder crash.

The tempest suddenly was hushed,
And changed the look the sea had worn,
As, softening the angry scene,
Came creeping forth the gentle dawn.

With morning came the gentle light;
And as the sun shed forth his ray,
Were seen two mastless, sinking ships,
The sole remains of that affray.





The Wind.

It rushes, rushes, rushes down the stony hill ;
It whistles, whistles, whistles through the forest trees ;
It wakes and dashes through the silent stagnant pool ;
It chafes, and, roaring, mocks the trembling angry seas.

It dances, dances, dances on the fir-tree tops ;
It waves the poplars' mighty arms in triumph dread ;
It tears, and tears, and tears the perfumed autumn leaves,
And casts them on the cold, cold ground, and leaves them dead.

It sweeps along the scattered leaves with rustling sound ;
It rattles, rattles, rattles down among the stones ;
It sways the clumsy bell within the belfry tower,
And saddens all the weary earth with its dull tones.

It moans, and moans, and moans around the shepherd's cot,
And tears the honeysuckle from its else bare walls ;
It tears the ancient ivy from the castle's sides,
And moans and whistles through its long-deserted halls.

It rushes, rushes, rushes round my lady's room,
Where she sits waiting for her lord's return alone :
The fragile, gentle lady, not a twelve-month wife ;
The youngest, fairest mistress the castle e'er did own.

It raves, and roars, and raves around the castle grey,
And beats, and beats, and beats upon the window-pane :
My lady cowers and pales, and trembles for her lord
Out in the reckless, ruthless, cruel hurricane.

It louder, fiercer grows, and still she grows more pale ;
She quits her stately halls, and shuts the oaken door :
It rushes, rushes, rushes round her as she goes ;
It rocks her to and fro upon the bleak, bleak moor.

It rushes, rushes round her as she climbs the hill ;
It whistles, whistles, whistles through the forest trees ;
It drags her, almost fainting, by the stagnant pool,
And mocks her as it drives her to the stormy seas.

It rushes wildly through her hair, and tears it down,
And, mocking, thrusts her down upon the pitying sands ;
It dashes ice-cold wavelets o'er her where she lies,
And places shells and seaweed in her lily hands.

It, moaning round her, bears away her loving soul,
And in her hair it twines a crown of silver shell ;
It sways the clumsy bell within the belfry tower,
And with its slow, dull sound it tolls my lady's knell.

And they that found her, lying there in the cold dawn,
That sorrowed both for her and him she left behind,
Could only weep and whisper 'mong themselves—"This work
Was done by the relentless, cruel, torturing Wind."



The Story of a Child who was found in the Snow.

Once the monks of Mount St. Bernard
Heard a faint and murmuring cry
From the high and snow-steeped mountain
Reaching almost to the sky.

Quitting hastily their convent,
Letting loose their splendid dogs,
Down the snowy Mount they hastened,
Through the snow and through the fogs.

"Stop!" cries Brother Martin Andrew.

"Brother, let the dogs go free:
Here's a little shoe and footmark—
Brother Francis, come and see."

"Sure enough," said Brother Francis,

"There's a footmark in the snow.

"Here! Bear, Lion, Nelly, Faithful—
Brother Keeper, let them go."

Lion, Bear, and shaggy Faithful
Ran off, sniffing as they went;
Little Nelly, faithful creature,
Went off straight upon the scent :

Coming quickly to a standstill,
Barking, running round and round,
Scratching hastily the snow up,
By-and-by a child she found,

Lying buried in the snow-drift,
Holding by its mother's hair—
Ah! poor little orphan baby,
No sweet mother now lies there.

Nothing but a lovely image
Which the soul hath broke and left;
Not thy mother, but an image,
Little babe! of her bereft.

So St. Bernard's monks turned homeward,
Climbing through the snow and fogs,
Bearing with them child and mother,
Followed by the faithful dogs.

When at last they reached the convent,
Down before the fire they laid
The poor dead and frozen woman
And the little baby-maid.

There she lived for fifteen years,
Till a marquis comes and takes
Her to bright and sunny countries,
Where are rivers, woods, and lakes.

Of their married life I may not
Anything to you reveal;
So upon this little story
Time and I must put a seal.



Emily.

I love the little rosebud red,
Bedecked with pearls of dew;
With silken mosses round its head,
And thorns, too, not a few.

I love one little rosebud mouth,
Which pearly teeth adorn;
I may not kiss it—no! forsooth—
Propriety's the thorn.

Above the rose are two bright stars,
Set in the cloudy skies;
But still they are not half so bright
As my true love's laughing eyes.

Can my love cease or ever change
As long as I shall be,
While I possess the loving heart
Of my rosebud Emily?



Faith, Hope, and Charity.

Out in the twilight three figures stand—
Tall, lithe, and graceful, with golden hair;
Under the hawthorn-tree, hand-in-hand,
They seem to shed a radiance there.

One of the beauteous maidens three
Looks up to heaven, her heart in her eyes.
“What is her name?” asks the hawthorn-tree?
“Faith,” sighs the zephyr, as home he flies.

The second—lovely, lively, and sweet—
To do good determined, while she lives.
“What is her name?” asks the garden-seat.
“Hope,” is the answer the echo gives.

The third is thrifty, kindly, and wise—
She gives to the poor what she can spare.
“What is her name?” ask the buzzing flies.
“Charity,” sweetly whispers the air.

So in the twilight the sisters stand—
Tall, lithe, and graceful, with golden hair ;
Under the hawthorn-tree, hand-in-hand,
Shedding a radiance round them there.



The Sailor's Wife.

The mother sits at the door of her cot,
In the morn, when the sun shines bright ;
She gazes afar to the harbour bar.
Whence her husband will come at night.

The mother sits in the moon-lighted room,
Where her babe lies safe in his bed ;
She gazes again o'er the pathless main.
Till the hours of the night are sped.

She looks up aloft to the starry sky
Till the hour of midnight is past ;
And the moonlight gleams on her child, who dreams
That his father is home at last.

Her blue eyes grow dim, and her tears flow fast,
As she bends o'er her little boy ;
And soft words she said, as she rocked his bed—
Soft words of comfort and joy.

Just then there appeared at the window-pane
The sad face of a sunburnt man :
The mother arose from her sweet repose,
And crying " Husband ! " to him ran.

" It is not your husband," the sailor said ;
" It is not your husband, so brave ;
For he lost his life, his child, and his wife,
In trying another to save.

" He knew that he never would rise again
From out the rude, roaring foam ;
He knew that no more he should pass the door
Of his dear little seaside home.

" He sent his love to his wife and his child,
Before his untimely death came ;
He bequeathed his boat, his house, and his goat
To you, with his stainless name."

One dreadful shriek, and the mother was calm
As a statue, and cold as stone :
And the world still rolled, though the tale was told—
She must fight with her grief alone.

But an atom of pride still reigned within,
And she said, as her blue eyes shone—
" His dear life he gave, another's to save,
And his spirit will cheer me on."



Nora.

Yes, my Nora's like a floweret,
She is so fair and sweet;
The flowers bow them when she comes,
And crouch beneath her feet.

Some say she's like a violet,
Because her eyes are blue;
And some say she's like a snowdrop,
She is so pure and true.

She's like a briar-rose, they say,
Protected by a thorn;
They sigh, and try to reach her, but
She leaves them all forlorn.

But like a sweet forget-me-not
To me she'll ever seem;
And old and young will ever own
She's lovely as a dream.

To me she's not a briar-rose,
But a rose without a thorn:
I've won her, and I'll wear her—
From me she'll ne'er be torn.



The Spirit.

A spirit lives beside my hearth:
It cheers me on my way;
A year ago I bade it flee,
But now I bid it stay.

It is invisible, but still
It helps me with its voice;
Whene'er I hear its gentle tones,
It makes my heart rejoice.

I would not lose that helping voice
Which lives within my breast;
I call it conscience, and it gives
To me great peace and rest.

THE END.

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